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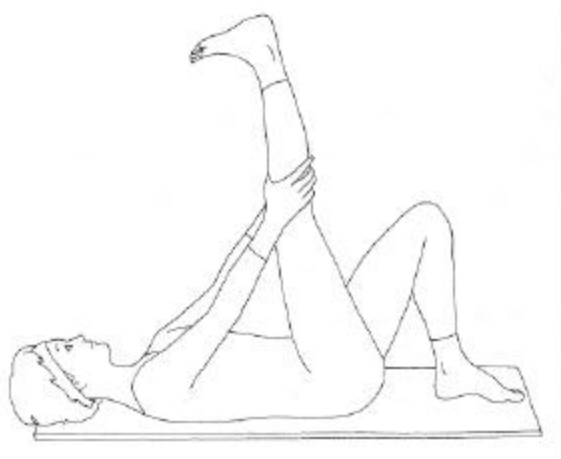
*"treating the cause of your problem, not just the symptoms"*

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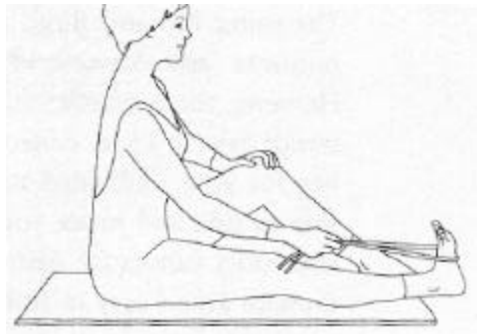
## Stretch Your Hamstrings!

In my last article I discussed how tight hamstrings could make you more prone to experiencing low back pain. To quickly review this scenario, the hamstrings are the muscles at the back of your thigh. They reach from the back of your pelvis to behind the knee. As you bend forwards, they stretch and allow the pelvis to tip forwards. The movement of your pelvis and the low back combine allowing you to reach down to the ground. If the hamstrings will not stretch, the low back must make up for it and bend even further. This makes it prone to injury. If you missed last week's article, it can be found under "weekly articles" at: [www.merrittchiro.com](http://www.merrittchiro.com)

This week I will give you some examples of how to stretch your hamstrings. These two stretches are safe and simple to do. Virtually no equipment is necessary. For both of them, make sure you are not holding your breath. There is no reason why you should not be able to do these stretches every day.



**Figure 1** – Lie on your back as shown with the left knee bent and that foot flat on the floor. Slowly lift the right leg into the air while that knee is slightly bent. Hold your leg with both hands as shown. You may feel a muscle stretching in the



back of your right leg. If the muscle is not pulling too hard, slowly try to straighten your right knee out until the muscle does start to feel stretched. Hold this position for ten seconds or more. Then switch to the other side and repeat four or five times on each leg.

**Figure 2** – Sit on the floor with your back straight the entire time. As shown in the diagram, straighten your right leg while your left leg remains slightly bent. Wrap a cord or towel around the bottom of your right leg as shown. While keeping your back straight, pull on the cord so your upper body leans forward. You should feel a stretch at the back of your right leg. Hold for ten seconds or more and breathe normally. Then, switch sides and repeat four or five times per side.

This muscle group is relatively easy to stretch. If you would like more ideas on how to stretch the hamstrings, email me at: [info@merrittchiro.com](mailto:info@merrittchiro.com) or simply call my office.